Met Office

April 2002

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Another mild month, with temperatures generally around 1 to 2 °C above average. It was the sunniest April over England and Wales since 1990.

Enfield recorded a temperature of 23.7 °C on the 23rd. On the other extreme, Altnahara recorded a temperature of -7.2 °C on the 13th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Warm and mostly dry overall. A very warm dry start, then more changeable, but still mainly dry. Very warm again later. Unsettled, wet and windy in the closing days of the month, with some thunder.

1st to 5th As low pressure to the west transferred to Biscay and the Mediterranean, warm or very warm conditions became established. After a little light rain in south-west and north-west at first, much drier weather with good sunny periods developed in most places.

6th to 10th The dry weather continued as a belt of high pressure stretched itself across the region between parent centres over Scandinavia and the central north Atlantic. There was a stiff easterly wind in the south at first during the 6th and 7th. Sunny periods prevailed on most days and temperatures were near normal.

11th to 16th Becoming changeable but mainly dry, with some sunny periods especially in the south-east. Conditions were mostly quiet, but weak fronts traversed the region bringing the odd outbreak of light rain in places. There was frost at times at night with Shap (Cumbria) falling to -5.5 °C early on the 13th, day temperatures were around normal. Scattered light showers affected the Midlands and eastern areas on the 13th and 15th.

17th to 20th More unsettled with rain at times especially in the west and north-west, with Nantmor (Gwynedd) receiving 60 mm in 24 hours on the 18th. On the same day a band from central Wales to south-east England gave some showers, a few were heavy with thunder. Temperatures were not far from normal and the sun shone between the showers. Overnight mist and fog patches affected a few places early on the 20th.

21st to 25th Mainly settled, dry and very warm but weak fronts in the north-west gave some rain on the 21st. Initially hill and coastal fog affected north-west areas and the Channel coast, with some local mist and fog patches inland also. Thereafter very warm, sunny weather prevailed with Enfield (London) reaching 23.7 °C on the 23rd, the warmest April day in the capital since 1987. Rain, heavy at times, reached western areas later on the 25th.

26th to 30th Unsettled, wet and windy, with gales around coasts as vigorous Atlantic depressions crossed northern Britain. Associated fronts brought bands of blustery rain and showers to the region, some outbreaks were heavy with hail and thunder especially during the 26th, 28th and 29th. It felt chilly at times and on the 29th snow fell over high ground in the north, while Mumbles (south Wales) reported a gust of 67 knots.

Scotland diary of highlights

Mild and dry for much of April, but cold and unsettled later.

High pressure was never too far away from Scotland for most of April, giving rise to dry conditions. Spells of warm weather alternated with interludes of near normal temperatures. There was more rain in the second half of the month, and during the last five days it became cold and unsettled.

The first warm spell began soon after the start of the month, as low pressure in the Atlantic sank south and winds turned into the south-east. Hazy continental air spread across Scotland, and the temperature reached 21.0 °C at Peebles on the 3rd.

From the 5th to the 7th a large anticyclone near Finland transferred south-west to Scotland and most parts of the country enjoyed three days of sunny weather. There was a large diurnal range of temperature, and on the 7th a minimum of -6.3 °C at Kinbrace was followed by a maximum of 18.0 °C at Dalmally.

Pressure remained high from the 8th to the 11th but weak fronts made the weather rather cloudy.

The fronts eventually cleared south-east and from the 12th to the 15th clearer, colder air covered Scotland, with pressure remaining high. Many parts enjoyed plenty of sunshine, with the temperature at Altnaharra falling to -7.2 °C on the 13th and -6.1 °C on the 15th.

From the 16th to the 19th low pressure in the Atlantic turned winds into the south. It was dry with sunny periods for most of the time, but a front brought cloud and rain to the south on the 18th.

South-westerly winds brought warm and humid air to Scotland for the next few days. At first there was plenty of rain in the west, but on the 23rd and 24th it became drier, with the sun appearing in most parts, especially the east. On the 24th the temperature at Aboyne reached 20.1 °C.

From the 26th onward there was a large fall of pressure and cold air of north-westerly origin covered Scotland. A couple of showery days were followed by more general bands of rain, with snow on the hills.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

This was a wet April month with above average monthly rainfall totals recorded in all areas. Early April was however largely dry, but conditions then turned very unsettled by mid-month with the wettest day being the 17th in all areas. Both day and night-time temperatures were above average, while sunshine totals too were greater than expected for the time of year.

1st to 4th Fronts and troughs brought bands of rain and showery conditions, with good spells of sunshine between showers.

5th to 10th An elongated area of high pressure extended over the province giving dry and sunny conditions in all areas. Temperatures were above average by day, but clear skies by night allowed values to fall below normal giving air and ground frosts in many locations.

11th to 15th As high pressure slipped off to the north-east, a frontal system tracked across the province and brought a change to much cooler and dulerl conditions on the 11th. Rain cleared to make way for scattered showers and good spells of sunshine on the 12th and 13th, however these showers died away to leave largely dry and sunny days on the 14th and 15th. Night-time temperatures fell to some of their lowest values of the month during this spell, giving ground and air frosts in many locations.

16th to 18th A deep area of low pressure in the Atlantic tracked north-eastwards on the 16th, bringing cloud and rain and cooler conditions to all parts of the province during the early hours of the 17th. Moderate rain fell throughout the day of the 17th and into the morning of the 18th in many areas, making this the wettest period of the month with between 50 and 60 mm of rainfall recorded in some northern and western parts. This

system cleared western parts quite quickly giving a mainly dry and very sunny day in parts of Fermanagh on the 18th, however, elsewhere conditions remained dull.

19th to 25th Scattered showers interspersed with good spells of sunshine dominated on the 19th, but dull and wet conditions returned on the 20th. This then brought a change to warmer conditions with temperatures reaching highs typically between 15 and 19 °C between the 21st and 24th. Night-time conditions were also very mild with temperatures in most areas falling no lower than 10 °C between the 21st and 23rd. Isolated showers were recorded on the 21st and 22nd, however high pressure gave mainly dry, warm and sunny days on the 23rd and 24th.

26th to 30th Unsettled with bands of rain closely pursued by scattered showers and sunny spells. The 26th proved the brightest day during this spell, but conditions on this date also turned much cooler. Daily maximum temperatures failed to reach double figures in many areas during the last few days of the month, with wintry showers and thunderstorms recorded in a number of locations on the 30th.

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